

Monthly Newsletter

BETTER LIVING BASICS

Thanksgiving Leftovers



On Thanksgiving, Americans waste an estimated 305 million pounds of food on Thanksgiving, valued at \$400 million. This year, instead of throwing out leftovers, try out some of these ideas below!

Plan Ahead - Planning ahead and buying only what you need will prevent you from having a substantial amount of leftovers. Determine how many people you will be cooking for, then only purchase that amount of food.

Freezing - If you do have leftovers and do not plan to use them right away, freeze the food in air-tight containers or freezer bags. Then, when you are ready to use the food, thaw it in the refrigerator, warm it up, and enjoy!

Create a New Meal - The internet provides great ideas of recipes to do something with leftover food from Thanksgiving. I have listed a few ideas below:

Leftover Turkey Casserole

Pumpkin Mac and Cheese

Turkey Stew

Vegetable and Turkey Stir Fry

Potato Cakes

Cranberry Pumpkin Muffins

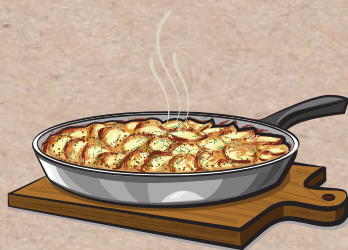


MUST-TRY RECIPE

Sweet Potato Casserole

Ingredients (10 servings)

- 4 sweet potatoes (about 1 lb)
- 3 egg whites
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 can evaporated milk, nonfat (12 ounce)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger



Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Rinse sweet potatoes in cold running water and pierce with a fork.
3. Microwave sweet potatoes on full power until tender, about 15 minutes. Turn them half way during baking.
4. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Remove skin from sweet potatoes and mash with hand beaters or food processor. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix until smooth.
5. Pour mixture in an 8 inch baking dish. Bake until casserole is firm in the center, about 40 minutes.
6. Remove pan from oven. Allow to stand for 5 minutes then cut into 10 squares.
7. Serve hot. Refrigerate leftovers.

Nutrition Facts

10 servings per container

Serving size

1/10

Amount Per Serving

Calories

120

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol < 5mg 1%

Sodium 90mg 4%

Total Carbohydrate 25g 9%

Dietary Fiber 2g 7%

Total Sugars 17g

Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%

Protein 5g 10%

Not a significant source of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger combined with vanilla extract are a delicious backdrop for sweet potatoes. Use canned sweet potatoes if you don't have whole sweet potatoes on hand. This recipe would be great for Thanksgiving!

Current Programs

THANKFUL

Get A Taste For Reducing Food Waste

Learn How To:

Reduce food waste in your home

The What and Why About Home Food Waste

Learn about the impact of food waste, why it happens, and how to limit it!

Let's Get Real About Meal Planning

Find out steps for planning meals with what you have and turning leftovers into a second meal.

Does Food Really Expire?

Understanding the Dates on Food Labels

Learn how to use the dates on food labels to buy, store, and eat safe and fresh food!

Composting Food Waste at Home

Find out which foods can be composted and different methods for maintaining your compost.

Session Start:

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity provider.



I am very excited about doing one of our new programs, "Get a Taste for Reducing Food Waste" with Foster Grandparents! This program discusses meal planning, composting, and how to understand expiration dates. We will be wrapping up this month!

This month through December, I will be hosting a program at Copper Rawlings Senior Center, Maggie Trejo Senior Center, Lubbock Adult Activity Center, and Mae Simmons Senior Center. Feel free to join!!

A FRESH START to a Healthier You!



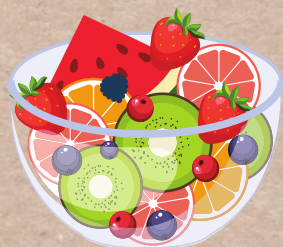
Join us and receive

- ◆ Support of friends
- ◆ Confidence to cook healthy meals for your children and family
- ◆ Practical cooking and shopping tips
- ◆ Handy kitchen tools
- ◆ Recipes for success in the kitchen



Program Updates

The first Thursday of each month the program "Choose Healthy" will be put on for youth at the YWCA!



This month we finished the Early Childhood Learn, Grow, Eat and Go! series at the South Plains Food Bank GRUB Farm! It was so much fun working with these kiddos! They learned how to make chocolate banana pudding, eat fresh lettuce from the garden, and so much more!



Let's Talk Composting

When you hear the word “compost” do you feel intimidated? I know I did until I learned more about it! Now, it is super easy and is a great way to do something with your food scraps other than throw them away.

Did you know Americans throw away enough food each day to fill up the Rose Bowl? That fact is astonishing to me! Therefore, composting is a great way to return food back to the soil instead of it rotting in our landfills. The next few pages are tips to get your compost started!

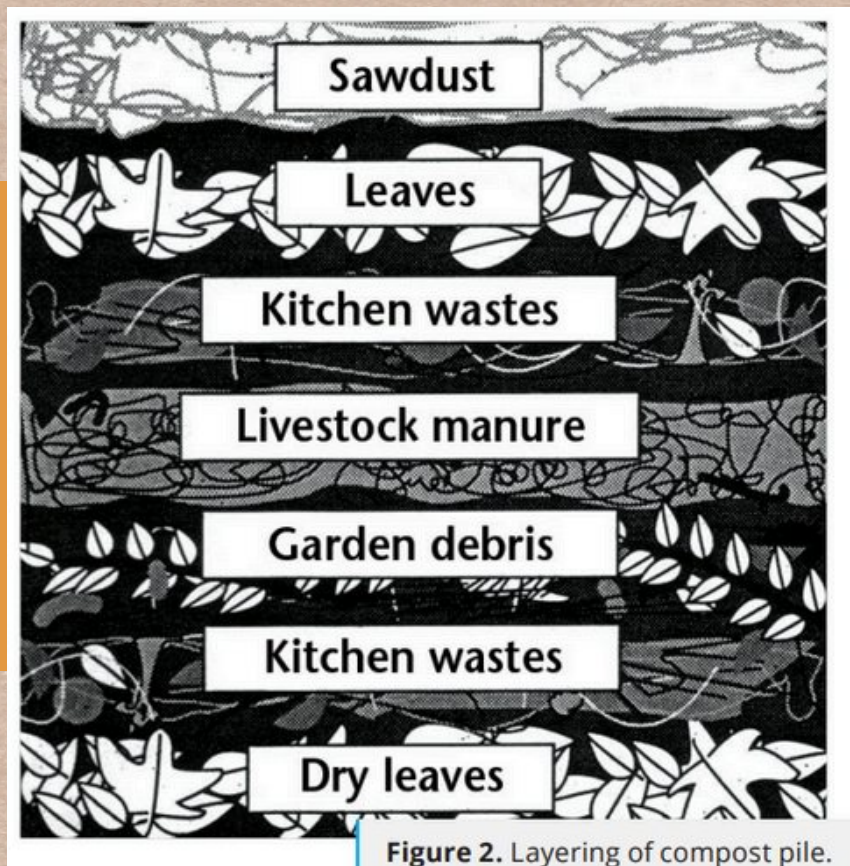


Figure 2. Layering of compost pile.

EASY GARDENING: COMPOSTING

Joseph Masabni¹ and Patrick Lillard²

If we composted many of the things we throw away, such as kitchen scraps, grass clippings, leaves, and other landscape debris, we could divert 20 to 30 percent of the trash currently going into landfills. By composting these materials, we can reduce the amount of waste we generate and produce organic matter and nutrients for our garden, landscape and yard.

Composting is simply the process of organic material decomposition. The resulting substance is called compost. Every garden benefits from the addition of compost because it supplies many of the nutrients plants need and also

- ▶ Improves the soil's physical characteristics
- ▶ Increases the soil capacity to hold water and nutrients
- ▶ Increases soil aeration

MATERIALS FOR COMPOSTING

Many materials can be put in compost piles, including:

- ▶ **Kitchen scraps.** Fruit and vegetable trimmings, coffee grounds and filters, and eggshells are great items for the compost pile. Do not use animal products such as grease, fat or meat trimmings, or dairy products because they break down very slowly, attract rodents and other pests, and have an unpleasant odor when they decompose.
- ▶ **Grass clippings.** Grass clippings (Fig. 1a) have relatively high nitrogen content and make good compost. Mix green, fresh clippings with soil or dry plant material such as leaves to keep the grass from compacting as it settles. Compaction prevents air from entering the pile and slows or prevents the composting process.
- ▶ **Dry leaves.** These are plentiful in the fall, and rather than putting them out by the curb, put them in your compost pile. Most leaves decompose faster and more thoroughly when shredded before they are added to the pile. If you do not have a shredder,

place the leaves in a row on your yard and cut them up with a rotary lawn mower. Rake up the chopped leaves and add them to the compost pile. (Figs. 1a and 1b.)

- ▶ **Manure.** Chicken, cow and horse manures are great nitrogen sources for compost piles. Cat and dog feces should never be put in a compost pile because they can carry disease organisms.
- ▶ **Sawdust.** Sawdust is plentiful at sawmills in many areas, especially in East Texas. Always compost sawdust before adding it to your garden because it can tie up nitrogen in the soil as it decomposes. Add extra nitrogen to sawdust to speed its breakdown.
- ▶ **Other materials.** Sod removed from the lawn, hay, non-noxious weeds, shredded newspaper, and hedge clippings can all be composted. Large twigs break down slowly so do not use them.



Figure 1. Grass clippings and leaves (1a) make good compost. Leaves compost faster if they are shredded before being added to the pile (1b).

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COMPOSTING CONTINUED

You can buy many types of composting bins, but you can also make one easily with wire fencing, cement blocks, bricks, or even scrap lumber. Less room is required if the pile is enclosed, but if you have adequate room you can also leave it free standing. With an enclosed pile, leave an opening on one side so the compost can be turned with a fork to allow air to enter the pile. The compost pile should be located:

- ▶ In a secluded area
- ▶ Preferably near the garden
- ▶ In a partially shaded area to prevent the pile from drying out too fast
- ▶ In a spot with good drainage so it does not become waterlogged



Ideally, a compost pile should be made up in layers. The first layer should be coarse plant material, such as branches and twigs, to allow oxygen to circulate up through the pile. The second layer should be 6 to 10 inches of finer plant material such as leaves, grass clippings, and kitchen scraps. The third layer should be a 1 inch layer of soil or manure, which provides microorganisms and nitrogen. The microorganisms are what actually break down the plant material. To do this they need food in the form of nitrogen. If you use soil for this layer, add 1/3 cup nitrogen for every 25 square feet of compost pile surface area. The nitrogen

IN-GROUND COMPOSTING

Composting can also be done directly in the ground, preferably where a garden row is to be planted the following season once the raw material has completely composted. To do in-ground composting:

1. Dig up the area—a long row or a raised bed—and remove the soil.
2. Fill the hole with the organic materials, such as shredded newspapers and dry leaves.
3. Cover it up with the original soil.
4. Let this area rest, or compost, for a few months.
5. Turn the soil and use it as a new planting bed.



CURRENT NEWS

Nutrition

MyPlate is a visual tool created by the USDA to help Americans make healthy choices when it comes to food and drink. MyPlate was launched in 2011 and features the five major food groups in a user-friendly, plate-and-cup arrangement that you can look at and easily see the relative amount of each food group to include in each meal. Making healthy food choices while you're young will help you grow and develop properly - MyPlate makes it easy to make healthy choices.



Physical Activity

A lot of teens don't get as much movement as they need for optimal health. Our society today has made it easier and easier to be sedentary. Instead of doing our own grocery shopping, we can order our food online and have it delivered to us. Many of us choose to text our friends instead of walking or riding a bike to their house. When we cut out opportunities to be active, it can affect how many calories we need to eat. Simply put, when our activity level decreases so do our calorie needs.

Gardening

Not all crops are well suited to every region. Identify plants that will work in your neck of the woods by looking up your plant zone—a geographic area based on average winter temperatures. Ashley Nussman-Berry notes that a common mistake for new gardeners is to plant the wrong crops: "I cannot grow citrus plants in zone seven, though I would really love to," she says. "You have to grow what will survive in your area or you are just setting up your garden for failure."

Type your zip code into the USDA's Plant Hardiness Zone Map to figure out your growing season and zone. This map divides North America into 11 planting zones. Take this information with you when buying seeds or seedlings (the packaging should clue you into which crops to grow).



WHAT IS BLT?

Better Living for Texans (BLT) is a nutrition education program for adults and children that are SNAP participants and SNAP eligible. The BLT program helps people make healthy meals, improve their physical fitness, save money at the grocery store, grow their own foods, and adopt better food safety habits.

We provide research and evidence-based nutrition, health and wellness knowledge to empower individuals, families, and communities to make positive changes for healthier lives

Statistics show that 1 out of every 6 Texans struggle with food insecurity and hunger and eat less than the daily recommended allowance of fruits and vegetables. In addition, Texas children and adults are less physically active than recommended.



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Contact me if you have any questions or would like to talk about setting up a program!